

Statement for Record

Stephen A. Irwin
Director, Agency Services, Disaster Response
for Convoy of Hope
Chair of the Donations Management Committee for
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee
on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response
on
"Emergency Logistics Management:
Transforming the Delivery of Disaster Relief for the 21st Century"

September 29, 2010

Stephen A. Irwin
Director, Agency Services, Disaster Response
for Convoy of Hope
Chair of the Donations Management Committee for
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding *Emergency Logistics Management: Transforming the Delivery of Disaster Relief for the 21st Century*.

Convoy of Hope is a 501©3 nonprofit organization founded in 1994. Based in Springfield, Missouri, our mission is to feed the world through children's feeding initiatives, community outreaches, partner resourcing and disaster response.

Each day, we feed tens of thousands of children in countries like El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua and the Philippines. For many of these children, the meal they receive from us is the only meal they receive.

We also mobilize, train and resource churches, businesses and other organizations to help meet their communities' physical and spiritual needs through our community outreaches where free food and services — including health and dental screenings — are provided.

In the past 16 years we have distributed over \$200 million worth of food, water and supplies in more than 100 countries. Each year corporations donate tens of millions of dollars' worth of "gifts in kind" to Convoy of Hope.

Considered an "initial responder" organization in disaster relief, we're known for quickly and efficiently providing emergency supplies — such as water, ice and food — to survivors of disasters. With a fleet of tractor-trailers, a 300,000-square-foot world distribution center in Springfield, Missouri, a high-tech Mobile Command Center, a network of partners, and time-tested distribution models, we have earned recognition for getting the job done.

Following Hurricane Katrina, we helped more than 6 million people in 74 communities in the Gulf where we distributed 35 million pounds of fresh drinking water, food and supplies. In addition, nearly 3,000 families saw their homes rebuilt or restored.

A strong network of partnerships with local churches, agencies, organizations and individuals in affected areas proved invaluable to facilitating our response. By utilizing local volunteers, we are able to promote a level of goodwill that helps communities return to their pre-disaster condition.

This was demonstrated last year in Indonesia, the Philippines, Samoa and American Samoa after typhoons and tsunamis struck the islands. We also saw the benefits of our partnership network play out earlier this year when we responded to the earthquake in Haiti.

Our expediency in Haiti was due in part to our established feeding initiatives. We also had a recently restocked warehouse, personnel on the ground, strong partnerships with like-minded organizations, and vehicles and communication systems to meet immediate needs. Because of these factors we:

- Distributed over 4 million pounds of supplies, 4300 water filtration systems, and 47,000 hygiene kits
- Provided more than 8.6 million meals
- Served 1 million people

As a member of, and now the chair of, the NVOAD Donations Management committee, I have trained and Convoy of Hope has used the National Donations Management Network — formally known as Aidmatrix — in many of the disasters we have responded to.

It is a useful tool in moving commodities to the end user. However, it is not the only tool, nor is it to replace the current systems of partnership and communication currently used in logistics planning of NGOs and faith-based organizations as they respond to disasters.

Recently, Convoy of Hope was asked to participate in the development of the Multi-Agency Feeding Plan Template. The template provides suggested guidance and procedures for a jurisdiction to consider in the development of a multi-agency feeding plan and a coordinating group (the Feeding Task Force) that supports feeding assistance in advance of, during and after a disaster throughout the impact area(s) of the State.

The template stresses coordination among the various organizations/agencies participating in feeding operations, including federal, state, tribal and local government entities, non-governmental organizations, National and State Voluntary

Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) member organizations and other voluntary organizations.

On August 20, 2008, FEMA Headquarters finalized a standard operating procedure titled, "Processing, Distribution, and Disposal of Donated and Federally Purchased Goods Controlled by FEMA." This procedure authorizes and sets forth procedures on how FEMA will support nonprofit organizations with donated and federally purchased goods. First introduced in September 2008 following Hurricane Gustav, FEMA provided goods to 33 nonprofit organizations in seven states, including 221 truckloads of water, 117 truckloads of meals, and 10 truckloads of ice. After Hurricane Ike in November 2008, FEMA provided goods to 34 national and state nonprofit organizations, including 228 truckloads of water and 6 truckloads of snack meals.

This program can continue to be developed to help NVOAD agencies respond without depleting precious donated resources.

Such partnership amongst all stakeholders will ultimately address the unmet needs in logistical planning and remove obstacles associated with inefficiency, wasted dollars, duplication of services and lack of progress, bringing communities back to their quality of life before the disaster.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you again for your time. I would welcome any questions you might have.